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THE ART OF JEWELLING.

THE splendor, the purity, and the rarity of precious stones have caused them often to be regarded as supernatural things, and it is scarcely more than a century since they ceased to be looked upon as possessing marvelous and mysterious virtues. In the middle ages, books on alchemy, medicine, and pharmacy testified to the superstitions which our ancestors inherited from the Arabs, who, in their turn, borrowed them from the ancient people of India. Theophrastus tells us that the emerald has the power of making water appear of its own color, an explanation of which may be found in the fact that the radiations of the emerald will tinge water, if it be made the medium through which they pass, with their own color. Mutianus declares that there are gems which petrify whatever is put in vessels made of them, and Pliny gravely corroborates him. A whole book might be written on the superstitions which have been connected with precious stones, from the diamond, in whose substance the imprisoned light, like Proteus in the

bands of Antæus, seeks escape in transformation, and flashes back to the eye "its seven-fold shaft of mystic fire entwined," to the ruby,—

"In whose cave of burning rays
A thousand crimson sunsets are distilled."

In fact, when we read the history of some of the precious stones which have blazed in the crowns of emperors, flashed from the coronets of kings, and sparkled on the bosoms of princesses; the trouble, social, political, and personal, which they have engendered; and the blood which has been spilt for their possession, there is little wonder that even in minds not wholly superstitious there lurks some thought of the magic of dæmons and genii dwelling in those apparently dull and inert stones, which have been heaved and tossed in the bosom of the earth through countless cycles, and shaped and molded amid "the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds."

There is scarcely a piece of precious jewellery which does not have its history and its pedigree. Of that glorious gem, the sapphire, which the Greeks

dedicated to Apollo, there are three species—Brazilian, Oriental, and water. Looking at an Oriental stone through a microscope, myriads of celated lines or projections horizontal to the plane of the stone can be seen. They are lengthened vacuities accidentally left in the structure of the stone at the time of crystallization, and the light striking upon them produces the effect of a white star. One of the largest white sapphires known is in the Paris Museum of Natural History. It was found in India by a wooden-spoon seller, and brought to Raspoli, the Roman jeweler. He sold it to a German prince, who, in turn, parted with it to Perret, a Paris jeweler, for \$31,000. It weighs $133\frac{3}{4}$ carats. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts possesses a pair of sapphires valued at \$140,000. A noble Russian family has had for two centuries a sapphire weighing 300 carats, and for which one of the Rothschilds offered \$300,000. In form it is flat oval, being about two inches long by an inch and a half wide. It is cut slightly *en cabochon* on top, and into a multitude of small facets beneath. Its hue is perfect, being a warm lustrous Marie Louise blue, not so dark as to show black beneath the gas-light, but having all the velvet softness and purity of tint that are required in a really fine gem of this description. It is mounted to be worn as a brooch, being surmounted with large diamonds of twenty carats each, while the pendant is composed of a large pea-shaped sapphire, weighing sixty carats and set in diamonds.

The true ruby or red sapphire is said to be the most valuable of gems when of a large size, good color, and free from fault; so that it exceeds even the diamond in worth and beauty. It is

harder than any other known substance except the diamond, which alone among precious stones it will not cut. It is susceptible of electricity by friction, retaining it for some hours, and also possesses double refraction in a slight degree. The finest variety of rubies comes from Peru, although the Burmese mines have long been famous, and one of the Burmese princes has in his possession a ruby that is valued at \$60,000,000. In 1777 the Czarina of Russia was presented, by Gustav III. of Sweden, with a ruby the size of a pigeon egg, which is still among the crown jewels in the Russian treasury; and among the crown jewels of France was a ruby, cut into the form of a dragon with outspread wings. The Duke of Brunswick, whose passion for jewels is well known, had two exquisitely engraved rubies, one of which weighed fifty-three carats; while a chalice and two censers, belonging to the Cathedral of the City of Mexico, are ornamented with one hundred and seventy-six rubies, on which, it is said, the Church dare not put even an approximate value. In the Odeschalchi Museum there is an engraved ruby showing Ceres holding a grain of corn, and another, in the collection of the Duke of Orleans, is cut in the shape of a heart, on one side of which is engraved a head of the Greek type. The stone is called spinel ruby, the Balas variety having a violet or rose tint, although the types vary, and have been found white, and even bluish-gray. The primitive form of the Oriental ruby is that of six-sided prisms, while that of the Balas and the spinel is, like the diamond, octohedral. Rubies have been successfully imitated, but the spurious ones are easily detected. The monster

ruby of Charles the Bold, set in the middle of a golden rose for a pendant, which was captured by the Bernese after his rout at Granson, turned out to be false.

No stone is richer in historic associations than the onyx which for several centuries has been one of the most cherished treasures of the Schaffhausen Commune, in Switzerland. The figure engraved on the stone is that of a female, wearing a crown of honor, and holding in one hand a horn of plenty, and in the other a Mercury's staff. The figure is believed to symbolize Peace, and the cameo, it is thought, was cut between the years 68 and 82, probably as a memorial of the reorganization of the Roman Empire by Vespasian. The setting of the stone is a masterwork of mediæval art, and the inscription shows that the talisman, for such it was doubtless considered, belonged in 1212 to a Count Ludwig Von Frohburg, and was originally brought from Constantinople by the Bishop of Basle, who took part in the Second Crusade.

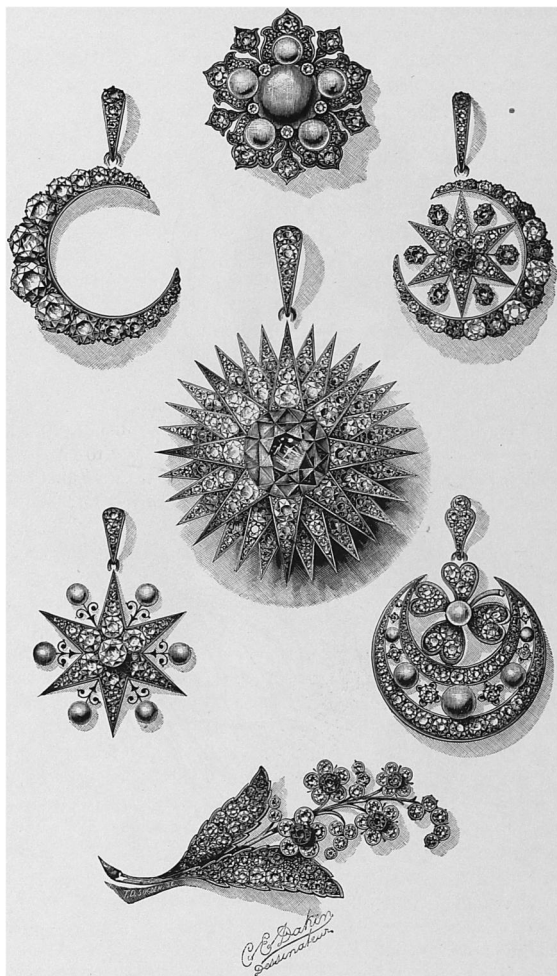
From the earliest times pearls, on account of their pure, lustrous beauty, have been held in the highest favor. One of the most remarkable pearls on record was purchased by the celebrated traveler Tavernier at Catifa, in Arabia. It is pear-shaped, regular, and without blemish, between two and three inches in length, and valued at \$500,000. The next in value is the Peregrina, the size of a pigeon egg, which was brought from Panama in 1560 by a cavalier named Diego de Tennes, who presented it to Philip II. of Spain. A negro boy was one day paddling about the coast, doing a little fishing on his own account, when he brought up an

oyster, which he was about to toss into the sea again as worthless. On second thought he determined to open it. He did so, and there within was the Peregrina. His good fortune procured him his freedom. Round pearls are more rarely found of a large size than those that are pear-shaped, the most perfect round pearl hitherto discovered measuring one inch across and being valued at \$250,000. An enormous pear-shaped pearl, brought from Berlin, was exhibited at the Paris Exposition in 1855. A most superb pearl necklace, valued at \$100,000, was worn by the Princess Royal of England on the occasion of her marriage to the Crown Prince of Prussia. The Empress of Germany has a pearl necklace each pearl of which is alike in size and beauty. This has grown from one pearl, presented to her by her husband the first birthday after their marriage, followed by a similar one each succeeding year. One of the large pearls in the English Crown is said to have been found in the river Conway, and was presented to Catherine, queen of Charles II. Several years ago there was exhibited in New-York the marvelous "Crown pearl." It was a most extraordinary freak of nature, and consisted of one large pearl resting upon three smaller ones, forming a perfect pearl. The wife of Caligula is said to have worn on state occasions pearl ornaments valued at \$1,600,000. Caligula also placed a collar of pearls upon his horse—probably the identical animal for whom he provided gilded oats in a hall of tortoise shell studded with emeralds and topaz; and in those days of ancient Roman luxury the ladies wore their slippers encrusted with seed-pearls.

From the very earliest ages, the invention and ingenuity of man seem to have been exercised on personal ornaments; and in the tombs of the various ancient peoples we find evidence of the early existence of the jeweler's art. It is interesting to trace the growth of this art, and see how, even thousands of years ago, the same skill that reared the pyramids, carved the Sphinx, and built Thebes with its thousand gates, could hammer out a gold chain, or mold a diadem. Underneath the walls of "god-built Ilium" the patient explorer has dug and unearthed marvelous and delicate work in jewelry and gold. The Roman, the Greek, and the Etruscan ornaments did not have about them any special individuality, although the workmanship was of a character which can probably never be surpassed. The Merovingian jewelry of the fifth century, the Anglo-Saxon of a later date, and the Celtic, as leading to the Gothic or mediæval, had their distinguishing characteristics, the Oriental spirit seeming especially to have touched the Celtic. Then came the Renaissance with the triumphs of Albert Dürer and Benvenuto Cellini, and the surpassing beauty of the works of the goldsmiths of the Italian republics. For two centuries after that period gorgeous effects were aimed at, and the artisan simply lived on traditional forms, and was contented with a mechanical kind of excellence. The *rococo* of Louis XIV., and the inanities of the "Queen Anne," produced poor and weak results; and it was not until the World's Fair of 1851 offered the opportunity of showing the singular simplicity of the methods of Oriental workmanship that designers began to study harmonious combinations, and searched for more per-

fect forms which they could follow. It was hardly to be expected that America, restless and inventive, her forehead touched with the art-light of the Orient, would fall behind in the advance that was thus being made; and the result is that now some American houses are producing jewellery which rivals, if it does not surpass, the best specimens of European art-work. One thing to be noticed also is the many sided characteristics of skill which this art development has produced. Of the art of engraving, which was contemporaneous with the transition between the middle ages and our own, it has been well said that it required, of the man who practiced it, that he should design like a painter and cut metal like a goldsmith. And to-day, when men are enjoying an atmosphere of intellectual freedom, and the spirit of science and curiosity is aroused, designers in gold and silver, and mounters of precious stones, are also capable of doing the most delicate work on paper and in modelling. For example, the illustration which ends this article shows not only pieces designed and made by a noted American house, but the drawing on the wood for the engraver was the work of the same designer who made the original drawings for the pieces of jewellery. Just as the contemplation of a picture glowing with life and color elevates and increases the love for the beautiful, so the presence in our midst of art-workers who rightly interpret the soul of beauty will develop a higher taste, and lead us to more carefully study the true art of decoration, whether on our personal adornments or in our homes.

JOHN V. HOOD.



EXAMPLES OF GEM JEWELRY BY BAILEY, BANKS & BIDDLE.